

Understanding Need-for-Change Statements

What is a Need-for-Change Statement?

- ▶ Need-for-change statements recommend how to change the 1987 Forest Plan, they are conceptual and broad in scope, and they do not provide specific plan direction.
- ▶ Findings from the Draft Assessment, where current conditions and trends are identified, are used as the measure of whether current plan direction is moving resources towards desired management objectives. Areas identified as not moving in the right direction form the basis for need-for-change statements.
- ▶ Provide focus into the second phase of planning, development of the revised plan.
- ▶ If the old Forest Plan addresses an issue well, there is no need-for-change. Need-for-change statements can focus on any part of the current plan, including any of the 15 assessment topics. 12 focus areas have been identified as having the greatest needs for change.

Parts of a Need-for-Change Statement:

- 1) Type of plan direction that need to change, for example standards and guidelines. See reverse for more on the types of plan components.
- 2) How the plan specifically needs to be changed. Does plan content need to be added, modified, or deleted?
- 3) What needs to be different in the new plan?
- 4) Why it needs to change, a “because” statement that explains what isn’t working well or why we want something different (typically from Draft Assessment).

Example: There is a need for the revised plan to provide desired conditions, standards, and guidelines for managing recreation activity impacts that occur in areas sensitive to resource degradation or at risk due to high visitation.

For more information, email santafeforestplan@fs.fed.us, call a member of the Forest Plan Revision Core Team at 505-438-5442, or visit www.fs.usda.gov/goto/santafeforestplan for more information!

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Types of Plan Components

A forest plan provides guidance for projects and activities. There are requirements for content as well as specific terms that are used. Plan Components are the core elements of a forest plan and all projects and activities should be consistent with Plan Components. They include:

Desired Conditions:

- Desired Conditions describe the specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics that are desired for the plan area, or a part of the plan area. These are described in enough detail to measure progress toward their achievement, and all management activities should be aimed at achieving the Desired Condition. Desired Conditions can be thought of as the set of goals that help define a collective vision for the National Forest in the future.

Objectives:

- An Objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a Desired Condition or Conditions and should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets. Objectives outline the tools for how we will reach the Desired Conditions and are mileposts along the road toward the Desired Conditions.

Standards:

- Standards are the rules we will operate within as we develop projects to accomplish Objectives and move closer to realizing Desired Conditions. These are mandatory constraints on projects and activities that are implemented with the Forest Plan.

Guidelines:

- Like Standards, Guidelines are mandatory constraints on projects and activities that are implemented with the Forest Plan, but unlike Standards, deviations may occur as long as the intent of the Guidelines is met.

Suitability:

- Lands are identified as suitable or not suitable for various types of multiple uses or activities based on the Desired Conditions.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring helps the responsible official determine if a change in plan content is needed.

Management Approaches:

- Management Approaches do not offer plan direction and are not required components, but describe a strategy to achieve a Desired Condition. Management Approaches often convey how plan components work together to achieve the Desired Condition. Changes to Management Approaches do not require plan amendments, and common Management Approaches to several topical areas could be summarized in one section.

